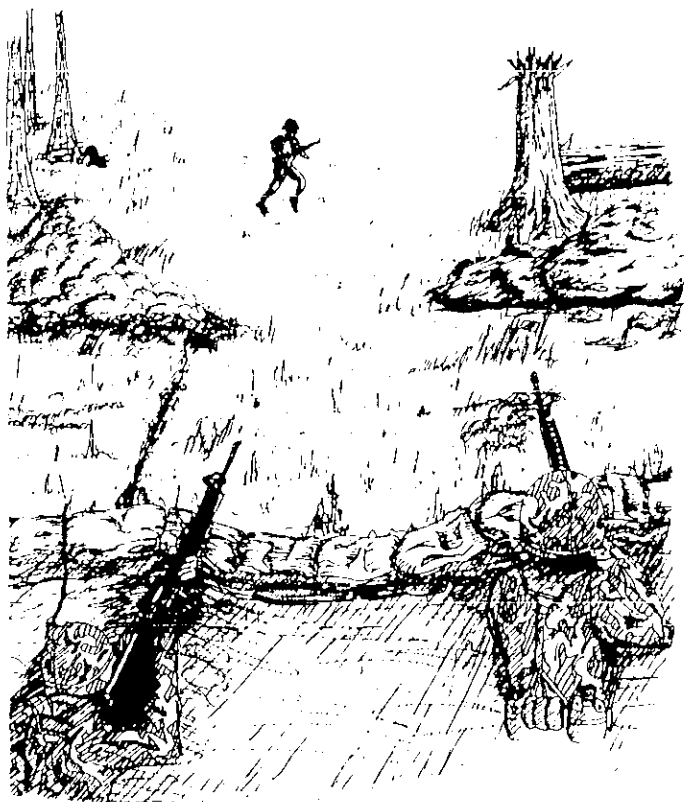


MOVEMENT TO CONTACT AND HASTY ATTACK

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The ability to conduct a movement to contact and then a hasty attack is the most important collective skill and fundamental offensive task a squad can master. The primacy of this skill is clear if one accepts that movement is an integral part of most operations, that most units will spend more time moving than fighting, and that most attacks, raids, and ambushes require a movement to contact or a hasty attack at some point, usually as a result of unexpected developments. Given the certainty of uncertainty on the battlefield, a unit must be prepared to gain and retain the initiative through offensive action, the core of which is the movement to contact and hasty attack. Training in this task is therefore a top priority.

The observations presented here are based upon lessons I learned from my commanders in the 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment and then validated for myself during training. These observations are separated into two categories—tactical lessons learned and training lessons learned. Input from an opposing force (OPFOR) is reported where it is applicable.

The tactical observations focus on “how to fight” at individual through squad level with special emphasis on leader tasks. The lessons learned from training relate

experiences from hundreds of iterations of movement to contact and hasty attack training, and they provide basic guidelines for the conduct of the training and highlight the benefits and costs of various training options.

These evaluations were conducted under nearly every environmental condition—the jungles of Panama, the savannah of Honduras, the rain forests of western Washington, the hardwood forests of the eastern United States, and the deserts of the Middle East and eastern Washington.

Most of the training was conducted using blanks, MILES training devices, and live fire, or some combination of the three. The squads usually faced two or three situations, at least one of which required the squad leader to request assistance instead of attacking.

The standards for the individual and collective tasks were taken from the existing manuals, primarily ARTEP 7-15, Field Manual 7-8, the Common Tasks Manual, and the Skill Level 1 and 2 Infantry Soldier's Manuals. Inadequate standards were corrected as required. Tasks that were not addressed in the literature of the time, such as “suppress or react to enemy attack,” were developed locally.

I found that the manuals do work and that the doctrine in FM 7-8 was validated time and again during the training. The more specific performance measures found in the Soldier's Manuals and the recently published battle drills were good most of the time, but they were not met (and probably could not be met) under certain conditions. For example, thick vegetation almost always prevented squads from identifying and suppressing the enemy within the time standards established in the “react to enemy contact” battle drill. While this observation does not warrant rewriting the task standards, it does emphasize the importance of considering METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, and time) in determining whether a unit is trained or needs practice.

Generally, individual actions other than leader tasks were not major contributors to a squad's failure. (The leader tasks were so critical that they will be addressed separately.) By far the most common fatal errors were related to movement under fire. Simply mastering the rush, low crawl, and high crawl is not enough to ensure a soldier's survival. In fact, most soldiers executed the movement techniques well, but the key to success was knowing which technique to use and when to use it. For example, many soldiers completely neglected crawling in favor of rushing when crossing what appeared to be open terrain.

Until terrain is viewed from the prone position, the abundance of cover that might be available to a low-crawling soldier is invisible. The OPFOR confirmed that rushing

soldiers were easier to locate and engage than crawling soldiers. Often, too, soldiers rushed from cover to cover forgetting they were supposed to hit the ground after three to five seconds, because that was the amount of time the OPFOR soldiers usually needed to acquire and shoot at them. The OPFOR soldiers said they collected most of their kills when an attacking soldier rushed for more than five seconds and was getting up from a roll in the open.

If an attacking soldier had rapidly changed direction, ducked, or varied his pace, however, the break would have been enough to disrupt an OPFOR soldier's aim and let the attacking soldier reach cover, even if his rush had been longer than five seconds. (This observation supports the cover-to-cover-rush principle stated in the Common Tasks Manual.)

NEXT POSITION

The selection of the next position became as important as the move itself. The attacking soldiers lived if they selected covered positions that were accessible by covered or concealed routes. If, however, they tried to hide behind vegetation, fired from the same point, or moved from the same place at which they were last seen by the OPFOR soldiers, they were promptly fired on. The OPFOR soldiers quickly learned to follow an attacking soldier and wait for the inevitable peek around a tree.

Although these observations only emphasize the long established basics of movement under fire, the errors continue to be made and require constant correction.

Risking injury or death to recover a key weapon was usually a bad decision. In one exercise, it cost a squad three soldiers. After a SAW (M249 machinegun) gunner was "killed" rolling in the open, first the grenadier and then the team leader unsuccessfully braved OPFOR fire to recover the SAW. This scene was replayed at least twice more during the same evaluation, once with a soldier trying to man the SAW and another time with a soldier attempting to recover an M60 machinegun. A better solution would have been to recover the weapons during consolidation and reorganization.

Communication often hinged on relays from team members, and visual contact proved to be the critical link in squad communication. An individual soldier's primary responsibility is to maintain visual contact with his leader. But he must also maintain contact with his buddy and relay signals in the event visual contact is temporarily lost between the squad leader and the team leader. Once, a frustrated squad leader repeatedly called to a team while a new team member passively lay behind a tree awaiting instructions from his "dead" team leader. The squad leader did not receive the report of the team leader's loss until the squad reorganized on the objective. The squads that understood the importance of visual contact and clear verbal instructions usually succeeded. In others, poor communication left the outcome to team leader initiative, uncoordinated action, and luck, if any.

The importance of the transition from basic rifle marksmanship to its application on a tactical range was highlighted by poor suppressive fire. Suppressive fire ranged from inaccurate, wasteful "mad minutes" to periods of silence caused by an inability to detect the OPFOR.

Suppressive fire involves placing well-aimed shots at known or suspected enemy positions. Initially, soldiers should use the rapid rate of fire until they have attained superiority; then they should keep the OPFOR pinned down by sustained fire until they are signaled to lift or shift their fires.

The inability to provide good suppressive fire is reinforced in training if soldiers are given too much ammunition and if suppressive fire is evaluated by its sound rather than its effect. Previously successful solutions to the problem of ineffective suppression were to count hits on targets or OPFOR personnel, limit the amount of ammunition, and "pay back" soldiers who accomplished the mission with the least expenditure of rounds. (The ammunition allocations shown in the accompanying table are sufficient for three iterations of contact.)

AMMUNITION	
LIVE FIRE	
5.56mm ball	30 rounds per rifle/issued in two 15-round magazines.
5.56mm tracer	102 rounds/issued in two 15-round magazines to each leader and six per M16/issued three per magazine.
5.56mm linked	200 rounds per SAW.
7.62mm linked	100 rounds per machinegun.
HG smoke	3 total, 1 per leader.
Dummy HG w/fuze	18, 2 per man.
40mm TPT	4 rounds per grenade launcher.
Pengun flare	1 set, assorted colors to squad leader.
BLANK FIRE	
5.56mm	30 rounds per rifle/issued in two 15-round magazines.
5.56mm linked	200 rounds per SAW.
7.62mm linked	100 rounds per machinegun.
HG smoke	3 total, 1 per leader.

One day spent on a range demonstrating the effectiveness of a single, well-aimed shot—compared to the relative ineffectiveness of automatic fire—is enough to convince most soldiers of the advantage of quality over quantity. Individual marksmanship varied from good to poor, depending on the quality of a unit's last marksmanship training and the time that had elapsed since that training. The same rules for suppression apply to SAW gunners, grenadiers, and machinegunners.

The most critical leader skills in the movement to contact were the ability to control without overcontrolling and the ability to read the terrain. The squad and team leaders' proficiency in these skills often determined the outcome of an engagement. The mastery of Skill Level 2 tactics enabled most squad leaders to control their squads reasonably well.

The experienced squad leaders were easy to identify,

because most of the others faltered when faced with the surprising difficulty of controlling movement in certain kinds of terrain. Every squad leader could employ various movement techniques, change formations, use hand and arm signals, and take action on contact, but only the seasoned squad leaders could both read the terrain and apply the skills well.

Control when not in contact was usually very good. The location of the squad leader during movement, particularly when bounding, varied greatly. The principle that the squad leader should "be where he can best control the squad" cannot be further refined without being overly prescriptive. Field Manual 7-8 and the Soldier's Manuals are excellent guides for movement. They address most of the considerations for determining the best place from which to control the squad. One consideration not mentioned, however, is the relative strength of the team leaders. For example, a squad leader should consider remaining with his less experienced team leader when in bounding overwatch, because this will probably be the critical point when in contact.

Battle drill provided the immediate response to enemy contact, but the transition from battle drill to the next action—attack, suppress, or move (bypass/withdraw)—was the real test of a squad. Most squads reacted well to enemy contact—taking cover, returning fire, deploying, and reporting in accordance with battle drill. Once in contact, the speed and correctness of a squad leader's actions were heavily based on the reports he initially received, especially those from the team in contact. If he is not with the team in contact or at least in a good overwatch position, communication immediately following the initial contact is critical to success, because it affects the squad leader's decisions for subsequent action.

RELAY SIGNALS

It became even more important for individual soldiers to relay signals when they were in contact. Communication between the squad and team leaders, which is vital to success, was sometimes complicated by reduced visibility from the prone position, vegetation on the ground, and the confusion of contact. The buddy teams had to know the other teams' locations and status and had to maintain visual contact with the team leader in order to follow him and do as he did. Team leaders, of course, had to communicate with the squad leader. If the chain of visual contact was broken, it usually destroyed the squad's ability to maneuver effectively.

Controlling a unit under fire is difficult, but control is a squad leader's most important job in wartime and ultimately the true test of his worth as a combat leader. Once a course of action has been determined, the squad leader directs the actions of his teams using voice, whistle, tracers, smoke, penguin flares, and other pyrotechnics.

Voice commands allow the most flexibility in issuing guidance, but they are limited by the volume of the leader's

voice. Arguments against using the voice for fear of identifying the leaders and their locations or giving away the plan of attack are probably not strong enough to warrant the use of a less effective technique.

Most squad leaders preferred to use voice commands, but not all used them well. Common errors included calling out "enemy to my front" (instead of using the hand and arm signal for enemy in sight or firing a weapon); use of names; team members talking more than necessary to communicate with their buddies or team leaders; and moving beyond voice range.

Certain commands were best transmitted by whistle rather than voice because of the distance between teams or the volume of fire at the time the commands were issued. Common whistle commands were "lift or shift fires," "consolidate on the objective," and "special teams, fall out." These whistle commands, the same ones frequently used to control actions on the objective during raids and ambushes, can easily be incorporated into standing operating procedures.

DISTRIBUTE FIRES

The distribution of fires was best accomplished by a combination of tracer fire and voice command. After some experimentation with a variety of mixes, leaders now carry full tracer loads to direct fires. Penguin flares have been used successfully in the past, but it is important that they be a color other than red to prevent confusing them with tracers.

Smoke grenades were generally not well received or well used by squad leaders as a signal or control measure. The smoke was invaluable, however, as an obscurant. Arguments were presented against using it to mark the flank of the moving team and as a signal to lift or shift suppressive fires. Squad leaders agreed that the smoke attracted more attention than it was worth and that it hid the maneuvering team from the suppressing team. The unpredictability of the smoke was also a problem, but this was accepted as a training deficiency rather than as a failure of the smoke grenade itself.

Even though the use of smoke as a marker and a signal was not well received, it was a critical addition when a squad had to cross an open area under fire. For this reason alone, it was deemed wise for each leader to carry one. Other pyrotechnic signals such as star clusters and flares were more than a squad needed for internal communication, but these could be used as part of a platoon communications plan.

Ranger squads, when training at squad level, usually had machinegun teams attached. The most successful squad leaders kept the gun team close to them and exercised positive control through mission-type orders. Thoughts on the employment of the guns were as diverse as the situations in which the leaders found themselves. Whether guns should be in the front, middle, back, or dispersed throughout the formation; whether the platoon leader,



squad leader, platoon sergeant, or weapons squad leader should have a gun; and the timing of their employment were all dependent upon METT-T.

The thread that binds all of these options is the need for a leader to maintain positive control of the gun. If the gun is attached to a squad, the squad leader must control it. Although a good gun team will usually carry on in the absence of orders, it should not have to. The squad leaders who kept the machinegun close to them and gave mission type orders, instead of trying to be assistant gunners, were successful. Guns that were kept in the rear usually had no influence on the action.

The successful execution of leader tasks is clearly the key to mission accomplishment, but the leader alone cannot guarantee victory. Individual actions combine to constitute team and squad actions. If enough individuals are executing their tasks poorly, the unit will fail regardless of how well the leader is performing.

The following observations apply to collective actions:

- **Speed killed.** Teams and squads that moved quickly when not in contact lost more than one man in the initial engagement. Squads that moved slowly usually lost no more than one man and often sighted the enemy first even though the OPFOR knew they were enroute. Once in contact, leaders who took time to assess the situation and develop a plan, instead of continuing to react, won. Occasionally, the lead team would charge off to slay the enemy without informing the squad leader of the situation. Its members usually became casualties, and were lost to the squad.

Generally, a fire team has no business attacking by itself.

If it is engaged without the trail team in position to provide overwatching fires, it should react to enemy contact in accordance with battle drill and provide suppressive fire until the rest of the squad is positioned to support its next move.

In training I have also seen squads automatically attack far superior forces when requesting assistance from the platoon would have been a better solution. If a squad attacked more than two men or any size unit armed with an automatic weapon, it lost at least two men and usually more during the ensuing fight. Whether or not this is acceptable depends on the commander's intent. It was certainly not acceptable during the conduct of the training I observed. A leader's decision to attack before properly assessing the situation resulted from rushing the action.

- The results of numerous contacts showed that the squad that made initial contact from a bounding overwatch formation fared better than those who were in a traveling formation. Squads frequently made their first contact in traveling overwatch, which was acceptable, given the likelihood of enemy contact. But after the first contact, some squads continued to use traveling overwatch instead of bounding. Their justification was the lack of overwatch positions. There were indeed places where it appeared an overwatch position could not be found, but it always paid to look. The most experienced and successful squad leaders did find suitable positions, even though at times the overwatching team had to kneel to see through dense vegetation or stand to see over high grass. The squad leaders who "could not find" good overwatch positions

had limited themselves to seeking positions from which soldiers could overwatch from the prone position.

- Until the objective is physically secured, it must be treated as though it is occupied by hostile personnel. An absence of return fire does not mean the objective is secure, and individuals must always use those movement techniques that limit their exposure. The terrain and vegetation may allow a less exhausting method of approach than continuous crawling and rushing. On-line team rushes—or worse, walking across the objective—can be costly mistakes. These mistakes are usually corrected early in a squad's training, because it is easy for the soldiers to understand the stupidity of this action.

- Consolidation and reorganization were usually rushed and incomplete as leaders unrealistically hurried to continue movement to contact. The squad leaders who realized that reorganization is a slow but vitally important task, and that movement would not continue until reorganization was completed, performed to the standards.

Casualty play, too, demonstrated the lack of realism in the three-minute consolidations and reorganizations conducted by the most eager squad leaders. One litter patient in an exercise often neutralized a squad, because the four litter bearers and the security force required to evacuate the patient left too few men in a squad to do anything.

Although every task in consolidating and reorganizing is addressed in the Soldier's Manuals, METT-T may dictate that some of these tasks be modified. The key to successful consolidation and reorganization is realizing the importance of the task and understanding the time requirements for doing it right.

LCE ADEQUATE

The infantrymen's equipment performed as advertised when it was used properly. Load carrying equipment (LCE) was adequate, though sometimes uncomfortable and cumbersome. A common problem was a failure to buckle the LCE, which caused unnecessary noise and made it difficult for soldiers in the prone position to reach magazine pouches that had swung behind their backs. The soldiers also found that it was smart to carry the magazines with the open side down and with a pull-loop of 550 cord installed in the bottom of each.

The M16A2 performed well all of the time. There were problems, however, with the magazine and drum of the M249 SAW, as well as with its accuracy. The magazine and drum problems are being evaluated, but the accuracy problem has been fixed with the improvement of previously applied modifications to the sights and corrective actions to replace barrels that were "shot out." (See "The M249 Machinegun," by Kenneth D. Martz, *INFANTRY*, September-October 1988, pages 35-38.)

The M60 machinegun and a well-trained team is still an awesome combination. Even the fairly old guns performed reasonably well. When well employed, the M60 dominated the situation.

It was difficult to evaluate the tactical effectiveness of the M203 grenade launcher because of safety restrictions and the limitations of target practice (TP) ammunition in providing downrange feedback. The TP rounds did allow gunners to appreciate the accuracy of the weapon at short ranges, and most gunners could score direct hits on E-type silhouettes at ranges out to 100 meters. Most gunners preferred to use the leaf sight for the relatively short-range engagements that characterized the movement to contact lanes. The superiority of the quadrant sight is not apparent until distances exceed 150 meters or so.

New gunners quickly learned to appreciate clearance requirements and arming distances as they smacked rounds into overhead branches or obstructing trees and found themselves in a rain of orange marking powder.

The ammunition carrying vest, an important part of the gunner's equipment, worked well. Some grenadiers failed to deploy with the vests, however, and attempted to carry rounds in their cargo pockets or ammunition pouches. It was easy to identify a guilty gunner from the trail of dropped rounds.

HAND GRENADES

Hand grenades are key weapons in a squad's arsenal but are difficult to simulate. Practice grenades or simulators, however, should be carried and employed just as real grenades are. Although many people seem to take it for granted that any soldier can accurately throw a hand grenade, recent training for the Expert Infantryman's Badge has shown that throwing a grenade is a perishable skill that requires practice.

The application of the skill in a tactical environment exposed more weaknesses—failing to carry the grenades by attaching them to the ammunition pouches, failing to warn other soldiers when throwing a grenade, and failing to take cover after throwing one. As with the 40mm grenades, it was difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of hand grenades because of safety restrictions.

Although hard-core infantry leaders believe in the spirit of the bayonet and visualize the combat infantryman making the final assault with bayonet fixed, ready for close combat, fixing bayonets may no longer be a good standing operating procedure. A nine-man squad will have only five soldiers with fixed bayonets—the squad leader, the team leaders, and the riflemen—because the grenadiers and SAW gunners cannot fix bayonets to their weapons. In addition, most squads, in peacetime or on the battlefield, will not be at full strength. If the key weapons are manned, the riflemen will fall out, leaving only three men with fixed bayonets—the squad leader and the team leaders. If only the leaders have fixed bayonets, and considering the high visibility of the new M9 bayonet's shiny finish, it is probably not a good idea to fix bayonets. (Some consideration should be given to modifying the SAW and the M203 grenade launcher to allow bayonets to be fixed on them.)

Aside from the insurmountable safety limitations of the grenades, no problems were experienced with ammunition. As noted earlier, leaders carried pure tracer loads to direct fires and also the attention of the team leaders and members. In addition, each man loaded three tracers at the bottom of each of his magazines to warn him of an impending magazine change. Both techniques worked well.

Finally, the performance of the squad radio, AN/PRC-68, was inconsistent. Some worked better than the AN/PRC-77, but most worked very poorly. Some squad leaders felt this radio was totally worthless and preferred to leave it at home. Others claimed that it did exactly what it was supposed to do—transmit at short ranges with very low power. Only time will tell whether the new squad radio, AN/PRC-126, will be better received.

In addition to the tactical lessons, a number of training lessons were also learned from the collected observations.

Training in conducting a movement to contact and hasty attack focuses on the ability of the squad to close with and destroy the enemy while sustaining as few casualties as possible. The training begins with the supporting individual tasks, with particular emphasis on leader training, and progresses through team to squad training in the dry, blank, MILES, and live fire modes. The training is easy to prepare but extremely time consuming in its execution.

INDIVIDUAL TASKS

The individual tasks that support the movement to contact are listed in the Soldier's Manuals and the Common Tasks Manual. The most important individual skills are marksmanship, hand and arm signals, and the ability to move under direct fire. Depending on the state of the squad members' training, other tasks may also need work. Camouflage, employment of hand grenades, application of first aid, and prisoner of war handling are often deficient.

Leaders need extensive preparation using terrain models and TEWTs (tactical exercises without troops) to teach them "how to think," not "what to think." Leader training should focus on mission orders, fire control, fire discipline, leader actions on contact and during consolidation and reorganization, and communications and control procedures. As the tactical lessons learned have shown, the importance of leader preparation cannot be overemphasized. In fact, it can be counterproductive to allow a leader to fail because of poor preparation.

Collective training should focus on battle drills, consolidation and reorganization, and squad maneuver. For maximum benefit, leaders should limit movement and focus on the fight-through phase.

Once the movement to contact and hasty attack has been identified for training, the collective, individual, and leader tasks have been selected, and support resources have been made available, a training and evaluation (T&E) plan is prepared. The T&E plan describes the following:

- The purpose of the training—Why are we doing this?
- The terminal training objective (TTO)—the task, condition, and standard against which the unit will assess its proficiency at the end of the training.
- The intermediate training objectives (ITOs)—tasks, conditions, and standards that must be trained in order to meet the standard in the TTO.
- The time schedule—about one-third of the available time should be allocated for the after-action review (AAR) and retraining.
- The support requirements.
- The plan for the after-action review—the plan for reviewing the performance of the individuals and the unit in relation to the ITOs and the TTO.
- Opportunity training.

Developing a scenario, a lane, and an evaluation plan to meet the stated objectives of the T&E plan is the next order of business. The scenario should offer no more than three engagements. The following options have produced good training:

- An enemy element of one or two men is encountered *while the squad is moving*. The enemy element may be a reconnaissance and security team sent out from a patrol base, a sniper team on the move, or two lost souls who have simply wandered into harm's way. In most cases, the squad leader reacts to contact and kills or captures the enemy.
- One or two enemy soldiers are stationary, possibly dug in. They may be in a security position on a defensive perimeter or an observation post/listening post (OP/LP). In most cases, the squad leader reacts to the contact and kills or captures the enemy.
- An enemy element of three to five soldiers with a machinegun is encountered, perhaps a patrol or part of a larger defense. In most cases, the squad leader reacts to the contact and requests support from the platoon leader.

EXPLAIN SCENARIO

For the reasons mentioned earlier, the scenario should be explained in such a way that the squad leader understands that he will probably become the reserve or overwatching squad as the platoon continues to move following the contact. In order to focus on the more difficult task of leading the platoon movement, the squad leader will continue to move following each engagement in accordance with the platoon leader's instructions.

The engagements need not follow a logical sequence. In fact, a squad can too easily become conditioned to routine sequences: for example, facing a sniper, then an OP/LP, and finally a platoon defense. Knowing the sequence of engagements simplifies decision-making and detracts from the squad leader's training.

The lane should be realistic. It should afford cover and concealment, allow for repeated rushing and crawling without injury to knees and elbows, provide maneuver options,



and contain tactically sound objectives.

The lane should be viewed from the enemy perspective when the positions are selected, and its length should be limited so that movement is reduced and the focus is on the hasty attack or "fight-through" phase. A lane in excess of 800 meters is probably too long—the squad will spend more time moving than fighting. (Some of the best training in my unit occurred on a 300-meter lane that contained three engagements.) The training area should include lanes for blank fire training, MILES training, and live fire training. (Additional considerations for lane selection when conducting MILES and live fire training are addressed later.)

An evaluation plan is essential. Without it, the feedback will be unstructured, and neither the soldiers nor the trainers will be able to focus their efforts effectively. The number of tasks for evaluation should be kept to a minimum; like good training, good evaluation must be kept simple. Of course, deficiencies should be noted at all times, but the focus should be on a handful of the most important tasks. The standards for all the individual tasks are found either in the Soldier's Manuals or in the Common Tasks Manual. Inventing tasks or unnecessarily modifying the standards may confuse soldiers. The squad leader is the trainer and evaluator; external evaluators should be limited to one person, preferably the platoon leader or the platoon sergeant.

Marksmanship evaluation is usually neglected during tactical training. The purpose of marksmanship evaluation is to provide the soldier with feedback on the effects of his shooting so that he will understand the importance of firing accurately instead of spraying the enemy.

The transition from linear range firing to applied marksmanship on a tactical maneuver range is a gap in many marksmanship training programs. Knowing when and where to shoot, which is the heart of suppression, is as important as knowing how to shoot.

Range training for a movement to contact and hasty attack is time consuming. Even if a squad has completed all its pretraining, MILES zeroing, and troop leading procedures before range day, the time required to conduct the lane will probably limit the training to three or four iterations per day. Taking the time to do it right, with the emphasis placed on a good after-action review, is the most important consideration in planning the training.

Movement to contact training culminates in a live fire exercise. Since live fire training provides only one-way feedback, though, MILES training should be conducted first. MILES training, by enabling the enemy to shoot back, reinforces the importance of individual movement techniques, selection of firing positions, and camouflage. It keeps leaders from overexposing themselves and, if they fail to learn, allows the unit to practice "fall out one" drills. MILES places a premium on marksmanship as the members of the OPFOR bob and weave to stay alive. The live OPFOR also increases the realism of procedures for handling prisoners of war and for the treatment and evacuation of casualties.

MILES does have some drawbacks. First, vegetation deflects the laser beam and allows concealment to be used as cover. This shortcoming can be overcome, however, by using a control gun to "wound" or "kill" a soldier who is using concealment for cover. Second, no MILES simulators are available for hand grenades or M203 40mm

grenades. Simulating high explosive effects with a control gun is an option, but not an ideal one. Third, if the MILES "zero" is lost, automatic fire becomes more effective than single shots, and thus may reinforce a bad marksmanship habit. When soldiers fire blank ammunition, even with MILES, they are less conscious of their marksmanship and ammunition expenditure. And finally, although this is not generally the case, the soldiers' will to win can encourage gamesmanship in MILES training. Having a controller with both the OPFOR and the friendly force does reduce cheating.

MILES is an excellent training aid, however, and is well worth the time and effort required to draw, issue, zero, and maintain it. (Spare MILES equipment and two extra batteries per individual set are required to offset battery and equipment malfunctions.) At least one full day should be allowed for familiarization training and zeroing before the lane evaluations are conducted.

The live fire exercise that follows the MILES training provides the squad with accurate, immediate, downrange feedback. When the soldiers move and fire in a realistic environment, their dissatisfaction with the accuracy of MILES disappears and they become comfortable and confident with their weapons.

As beneficial as live firing may be, though, it also has several significant shortcomings. Range fans that do not exceed 150 degrees limit the maneuver option and force frontal assaults rather than flank assaults. Most squads understand the concept of flanking the OPFOR, but through repeated live firing within restricted fire fans they develop some bad habits. Complementing live fire training with MILES blank fire training is one way to counteract this inability to flank the OPFOR.

Another argument for the integration of MILES on a live fire range is the tendency for soldiers to get careless when hunting "targets." If MILES pretraining has not eliminated this tendency, having the soldiers wear MILES harnesses during the live fire will allow a controller to warn or "kill" careless soldiers. The best solution, though, is to find a live fire range that will support flanking moves.

The integration of live hand grenades into this kind of training is difficult. Currently, the safety requirements are so restrictive that simulators and fuze-type dummy grenades may be the best option. But hand grenades can be employed effectively to clear bunkers, and they can be used from a trenchline in the consolidation phase.

Targetry options range from the stationary E-type silhouette to fully automated targets with counters. If automated targets are used, the logistics requirements of battery

resupply and maintenance, target protection (hole digging), and target maintenance must be fully understood in the unit. Any target system will work, but the simpler systems work the best. Manual pop-up targets assembled from wooden frames, E-type silhouettes, elastic straps, balloons, and pull cords are easy to construct and emplace, and they work well. The silhouette, too, can be modified to present a flank shot by inserting a half target perpendicular to and centered on the front of the target.

Double balloons can be used to differentiate between suppressed targets and killed targets. (When one balloon pops, the target is suppressed; when the second balloon pops, the target falls.) Chemical lights can be attached to the balloons for live fire exercises at night. Contact can be initiated with a pneumatic gun or by setting off fireworks that have been attached to the targets. Some kind of clear cue to initiate the engagement is vital to the soldiers' understanding and motivation.

At the conclusion of the training, time must be allocated for the squad leader to conduct an after-action review. The learning takes place when the soldiers present their own observations of things done well and of things done poorly. The squad leader must control the review so that it does not deteriorate into a lane grader or leader critique of the soldiers' performance.

The after-action review should be conducted on a terrain model overlooking the lane. A videotape of the performance will help considerably if one is available. Tasks that were executed poorly should be retrained as soon as possible. If only the leader was deficient, one technique is to have him walk behind another squad and observe its training.

A movement to contact and hasty attack is clearly an important and productive training event and a core tactical mission. No collective offensive task provides more economical training on the most important offensive tasks. Although this training is leader intensive, it also requires all of the members of the unit to perform critical individual combat skills in support of the collective task.

A unit that masters the movement to contact and hasty attack is trained to face uncertainty with confidence and skill. Whatever the cost of this training may be, the result is worth it.

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